

Members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Elizabeth Montes, I'm 46 years old and a resident of Hartford. I'm a member of Hartford Deportation Defense. I'm in favor of **HB6616: An Act Concerning Expansion Of Husky Health Benefits To Those Ineligible Due To Immigration Status.**

I want to tell you a little about me. I have 2 children. A girl who's 23, and a 13-year-old boy. During his first 7 years of life, my son was in good health. He played soccer and took swimming classes. But in July of 2017 my son got a fever. The pediatrician checked him and told me "it's a virus, continue with the Tylenol and he'll be better in 3 days." That Wednesday night my son started convulsing, and wouldn't stop. I called 911. Upon arriving at the hospital, they induce a coma for 8 days. They woke him up. A hard day. He recognized me and went to sleep. He spent 9 good hours and then the convulsions started again. His oxygen dropped dramatically. They intubated him again. They induced him again, for a month. My son, as he was before, never woke up. There was no other option, there was a lot of activity in his brain.

Last September they woke him up again. They had to do a tracheotomy and a tube in his stomach to be able to give him food and his medicines. Five months in the hospital. With the trauma for the whole family, the anguish, and the pain that nothing would be the same again. When we left, my son had to use diapers, he couldn't walk, he had his tracheotomy for breathing and his tube for eating and medicine.

Nothing prepares you for this. No one is prepared for something so big. The trauma of all those days praying and hoping to see improvement, hoping to wake up one day and find that all this was a nightmare. I wasn't the only one affected, my whole family was affected. However, we couldn't have a psychologist to help us and guide us through the trauma.

I, having worked and paid taxes for 18 years, am excluded from health insurance and social security. I can't have a psychologist to help me to accept my new reality. It has been so difficult for my family to endure everything. We are not made of stone. We feel, and we need health insurance to be able to keep giving my son the best care possible. People of the committee, put a hand on your heart. Our stories are real. We just want decent insurance for each of us.

I support HB6116 and I hope that the committee votes in favor of continuing to expand HUSKY health insurance for our immigrant communities. Expanding to 26 years old is a great step, but we must keep moving forward until all ages have access.

Thank you for your time,
Elizabeth Montes